DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 236 857 EC 160 877

TITLE	Careers in Special Education.
INSTITUTION	Utah State Univ., Salt Lake City. Intermountain Plains Regional Resource Center.
SPONS AGENCY	Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Jul 82
NOTE	18p.
AVAILABLE FROM	North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Division of Special Education, State Capitol, Bismarck, ND 58505-0164.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Disabilities; Gifted; *Special Education Teachers; Talent; Teacher Certification; *Teacher Education; Teacher Recruitment

ABSTRACT

The booklet is intended to help recruit teachers and familiarize prospective teachers and related services personnel with opportunities for serving exceptional children in North Dakota. Teaching careers and professional preparation for students with five types of disabilities (specific learning disabilities; emotional disturbances; mental retardation; language, speech and hearing disorders; and severe sensory or physical impairments) are described. Additional information is provided for careers in administration, psychological and social work services, early childhood education for the handicapped, related therapy, and vocational special needs. The booklet concludes with a listing of teacher preparation programs at two state colleges and a brief discussion of teaching gifted and talented students. (CL)

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CAREERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
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PERSONNEL NEEDED IN NORTH DAKOTA SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A demand for special education personnel in North Dakota continues to grow. During the 1981-82 school year, North Dakota schools employed over 1,100 personnel in the special education field. Two years earlier there were less than 900.

As schools began to program for the more severely handicapped students, many of whom would previously not have been provided educational programs, additional positions were necessary. The learning and physical needs of the severely and multihandicapped students are complex. Teaching these students requires a team of persons with specialized skills and specialized training.

Not only have an increased number of handicapped children been enrolled in the schools, but the quality of the educational services has improved with the addition of related services. New information and skills in diagnosis and programming has opened up new professional areas in serving the handicapped. Programs for the gifted and talented students have also grown.

Recognizing the need for serving handicapped children at a very early age has brought many preschool programs for the handicapped into existence.

Keeping North Dakota schools supplied with teachers in all areas of need calls for a never ending task of recruitment. Even when there is not a statewide shortage, there is always a need for recruitment to assure that personnel are available in the community where a vacancy exists. This is especially important in the rural areas because there is less mobility to bring already prepared teachers into a community.

CAREERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION is an attempt to make known the total spectrum of professional areas involved in serving exceptional children. It is hoped that experienced classroom teachers seeking a new challenge will identify an area of training which has appeal and which holds promise for new opportunities.

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN NORTH DAKOTA

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A SPECIAL EDUCATION CAREER FOR YOU

This booklet has been prepared to help you explore the professional personnel and services involved in the education of exceptional children. It will open up avenues of work for you to use your special skills and talents.

Special education is for students who require specially designed instruction either because of a handicap or because of exceptional ability.

If you enjoy working with children and youth; if you are challenged by sharing your skills with a team of professional persons; if you are willing to learn new skills which will give handicapped and gifted children the education they deserve, then a career in special education is for you. It may be the most challenging job you'll ever love.

"It may be the most challenging job you'll ever love."

STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES (SLD)

Every classroom includes some students who for various reasons have difficulty doing the academic tasks expected of them. A small percentage of these students are diagnosed as having a specific learning disability (about two percent of the school population).

The SLD teacher must have competence in analyzing the learning needs of students and in matching these with curriculum demands. As part of the educational team, the SLD teacher assists in sorting out the learning difficulties of all students so those with specific learning disabilities can be identified, the specific disorder diagnosed, and appropriate programs provided. The SLD teacher works with personnel in related areas such as speech pathology and school psychology in diagnosing the complex learning problems of the severely handicapped SLD student.

Professional Preparation

Training for the SLD teachers is provided on the graduate level and is especially geared to experienced classroom teachers who wish to return to school for specialized training. Approximately one academic year (or three summer sessions) is required to complete the training in specific learning disabilities for personnel who already have a background in elementary or secondary education. Some training programs also provide undergraduate courses in specific learning disabilities. If undergraduate courses are taken along with a degree in elementary and secondary education, a minimum number of additional graduate hours will be required. Preparation includes normal development such as advanced child psychology or language development and disorders, assessment, curriculum and instructional design, academic remediation, and practicum in diagnosis and teaching students with specific learning disabilities.

EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED STUDENTS (ED)

The education of seriously emotionally disturbed students is dependent on resources which can make a student's total life space supportive to a reeducational process. Professional persons responsible for programming for the emotionally disturbed must know how to help the student identify and use the resources available to him in the home, neighborhood, community, and the school. The teacher of the emotionally disturbed is dependent on social work and psychological services either within the school or in the community to share the team responsibilities. The teacher's role on this team of professional persons is to identify those aspects of the student's emotional functioning which interfere with the learning process and to plan strategies which can make learning successful.

The seriously emotionally disturbed student must often be educated in a separate class or a resource room, but with as many experiences with the nonhandicapped as possible. Eventual integration often requires extensive follow-up by the teacher of the emotionally disturbed. Moderately handicapped ED students can usually remain in the regular classroom but will require a resource teacher of the emotionally disturbed to function in crisis intervention or life space interviewing and to assist with behavior management in the regular classroom.

Professional Preparation

About one year of training is required for experienced classroom teachers who wish to return to school for training in a specialized area. Some training programs offer undergraduate courses which can be taken along with an elementary or secondary education program. The more specialized courses must be taken at the graduate level. Course work includes psychology and education courses providing psychopathology overview and psychoeducational needs of the emotionally disturbed. Other courses include assessment and remediation of learning needs and interdisciplinary or alternative programming as well as practicum experiences.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED

Special education services for the mentally retarded can best be described by looking separately at programs for the mild to moderately retarded and programs for the moderate to severely retarded.

Educable mentally handicapped students (EMH) have been provided services in North Dakota schools for many years. A program for these students was a major area of development after the North Dakota special education law came into being in 1951. Most of the mild to moderately retarded students can benefit from portions of the regular education program. If these students are enrolled in a special class, attempts are made for as much participation in regular programs as possible.

Trainable mentally handicapped students (TMH) range from moderate-severe to severely handicapped. Because these students, as a group, experience more severe accompanying deficits in language, motor, and other areas of development than do the EMH students, the TMH classes often include some multihandicapped students. Team effort is critical for personnel working with the severe and multihandicapped children and much of the curriculum focuses on health, communication, social, and other skills for independent living. Paraprofessionals are frequently employed in TMH programs because of the need for physical attention for many of the students.

Public school programs for the severe and profoundly retarded and for severe multihandicapped children have only recently been developed. Services for these students are often provided in cooperation with other agencies who may sponsor community living units. Instructional personnel coordinate the in-school curriculum development with child care workers responsible for extended day instruction in living units. State operated programs for the severely and profoundly retarded are located at San Haven and Grafton.

Professional preparation for teachers of the retarded include psychology courses which relate to learning, social, and personal development. Methods courses include curriculum development in academic areas and in teaching toward independence and daily living. Course work related to prevocational or vocational education is also required as this is a major area of emphasis in the education of all retarded students. Student teaching in a program for the retarded is required and should be done on the level (EMH or TMH) where the teacher expects to be employed.

LANGUAGE, SPEECH, AND HEARING DISORDERS

Language, speech, and hearing disorders cause a student to have difficulty communicating thoughts and ideas. The specific problem may be in articulation, understanding or using language, voice control, or fluency of speech, such as a stuttering problem.

The speech pathologist is trained to identify the nature of a student's communication disorder and to design a program which will help the student improve his or her speech and other communication skills. Much of the speech pathologist's work is on an itinerant basis working with 50-60 students. However, for students with severe communication disorders, intensive daily work is required. To plan and implement an effective program for severely handicapped students, the speech pathologist works with the teacher and other specialized personnel. Working with parents is an important part of the professional person's responsibility in helping communication disordered students.

Professional Preparation

Basic preparation in speech pathology is offered on the undergraduate level but some training in specialized course work is required on the graduate level. Preparation includes a study of physiology of the speech mechanism, voice science, language development and disorders, and a sequence of professional speech pathology courses. A supervised practicum of at least 200 clock hours is required, at least half of which should be obtained in a school setting with students of all ages.

STUDENTS WITH SEVERE SENSORY OR PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT

The largest number of North Dakota's deaf and blind students are enrolled in state residential schools with the North Dakota School for the Deaf at Devils Lake and the North Dakota School for the Blind at Grand Forks. The North Dakota School for the Blind and the Grafton State School for the Retarded also include components for deaf-blind multihandicapped children. The Anne Carlsen School in Jamestown is a private residential facility for the physically handicapped.

In the larger cities, some school districts are providing services for students with severe hearing and vision handicaps as well as some students that are diagnosed as blind and deaf. A larger group of students with moderate vision and hearing handicaps as well as students with physical disabilities can function in the regular program with supportive services and special equipment or materials.

Some examples will describe the responsibilities of a resource teacher in any of these areas of exceptionality--vision, hearing, or physical impairment. A deaf student will require ongoing language training, speech improvement, or lip reading. Lessons may need to be rewritten in more simple syntax for these students. A blind student may need daily lessons rewritten in braille, and if the student has usable vision, large print books or special reading lamps may be required. An orthopedically handicapped student may require modifications in worktable or seating arrangements. Typing may need to be substituted for writing and sometimes special typing equipment is required.

Professional Preparation

Course work is provided on a graduate or undergraduate level for persons interested in teaching these areas of exceptionality: hearing impairment and deaf, vision impairment and blind, and physical handicaps. A candidate in any of these areas will take characteristics and methods courses in the chosen area of disability as well as student teaching. Courses are also required in areas of related problems such as a course in mobility training for teaching of the blind, special language and audiology courses for teachers of hearing impaired.

ADMINISTRATION

A director of special education is responsible for the administration of a special education program or unit. The special education unit may be one school district as in the case of some of the larger cities, or it may be a multidistrict unit. The administrative duties of a director are to oversee the delivery of services to exceptional children, to handle the financial resources, to supervise special education personnel and to implement regulations established by state and federal governments.

Qualifications for a director of special education include basic preparation and experiences in one area of special education; a masters degree, preferably in special education; and administrative courses such as school law, personnel supervision, and school finance.

Where programs are of sufficient size and scope, program coordinators are often employed and are assigned to supervise six or more special education personnel in a given area such as speech pathology or in coordinating services in one program area such as mental retardation.

A program coordinator must have completed a masters degree. Additional qualifications include experience in special education and a credential in the area for which the candidate has coordination responsibility. If more than one area is to be coordinated, additional training in each area to be coordinated must be completed.

PERSONNEL IN PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

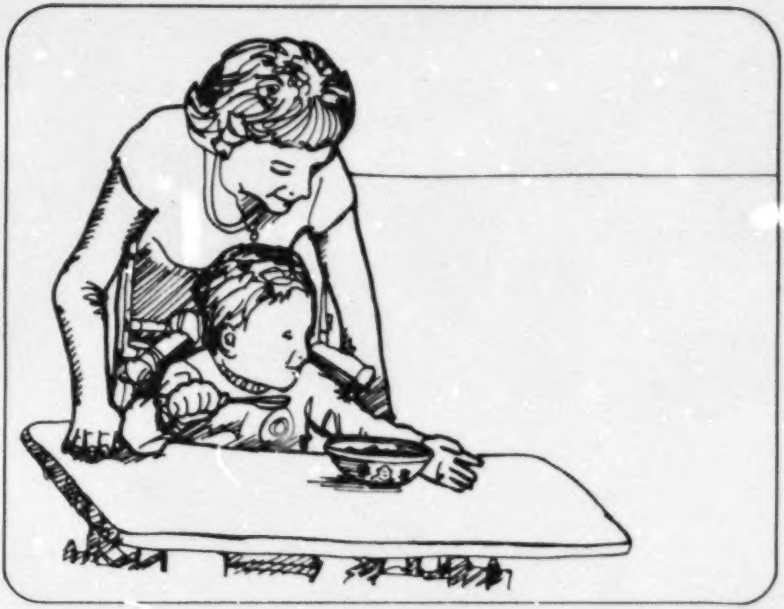
The services of medical social workers, psychiatric social workers, and clinical psychologists are sometimes required for students with serious and complex personal and family needs. Often consultation services for school personnel are provided by professional persons in community agencies. Some schools contract or employ personnel on a part-time basis to deal with the more serious clinical type problems. School social workers and school psychologists are employed by the schools and have a direct responsibility as part of the educational team in analyzing a student's needs and in planning appropriate educational programs for the student.

The responsibilities of a school psychologist include some direct work with students and families, inservice training, consultation with other school personnel, and working with community agencies.

The school psychologist is trained on a masters degree level or may have a specialist or doctoral degree in school psychology. Specific course work is required to assure competence in assessment, counseling, behavior management, and interpretation of educationally relevant learning and social behavior.

The responsibility of a school social worker deals with students and family needs, especially as they relate to school problems. The school social worker functions in a liaison role on behalf of the school with the home and community resources.

A school social worker must be a graduate of a recognized school of social work. The social worker is trained in interviewing techniques, in fundamental social concerns, and in analyzing the effect of personal and family problems on learning.



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Teachers in early childhood education programs for the handicapped may be employed in a center-based or home-based program for preschool age handicapped children. This is a recent addition to special education programming in North Dakota and many persons who have been employed in other areas of special education have chosen to receive additional training in order to work with preschool handicapped children. Others have come from elementary education or kindergarten education. Teachers in early childhood programs for the handicapped work with a team of other professional persons in developing and implementing programs for preschool age children. Consultation and working along with parents is an important part of the team's responsibility.

Professional preparation includes infant and early childhood development and assessment, methods in teaching preschool handicapped children, home-school relations and practicum in working with preschool handicapped children.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

I. Related areas of audiology, physical therapy, occupational therapy

Often schools, especially those in rural areas, depend on clinical services from other facilities in the community to provide physical therapy, occupational therapy, or audiological assessment and consultation services. Schools may contract directly with a professional person or with the agency employing personnel in the area of the desired service. However, many schools do employ part-time or full-time occupational therapists, physical therapists, and audiologists.

Professional Preparation

Personnel in related or supportive services must have graduated from a recognized training program and hold registration or certification issued by their respective licensing agents. North Dakota has state licensing registration for physical therapists. Occupational therapists are certified by a national registry. The American Speech and Hearing Association certifies personnel in clinical audiology.

II. Other School Personnel with Special Assignments with Handicapped Students

A. **Adaptive Physical Education**

Many handicapped students require a modified program in physical education because of health restrictions, physical limitations, or severe perceptual problems. Physical education teachers often take advantage of inservice training or special course work to become better equipped in working with handicapped students who are integrated in regular physical education classes. Some schools assign a full-time physical education teacher to adaptive physical education classes. College programs provide specialized training in adaptive physical education.

Continued...

B. **Personnel in Vocational Special Needs or Vocational Evaluation**

The responsibility of vocational special needs personnel is to assure that handicapped or disadvantaged students can benefit from prevocational or vocational related course work. Vocational special needs personnel work closely with vocational education teachers and with junior and senior high school special education teachers. A work-study program is an important part of the special needs program.

The assessment of a student's vocational potential is a critical part of the handicapped or disadvantaged student's total evaluation in order to assure that an appropriate program is being planned. Special education teachers, school psychologists, and vocational special needs personnel work jointly in the evaluation process. Some high schools assign a full-time vocational evaluator to carry out this responsibility.

GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

Students who demonstrate a potential for high levels of abstract thinking, generalizing, solving complex problems,or seeing unusual or diverse relationships, can be found in nearly every classroom. Of these students, some excel or are capable of excelling two or more years beyond their peers (2 to 5% of the population). Gifted students are not only those who have high intellectual abilities as measured by an intelligence test, but also those with academic aptitude in one or more areas, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, psychomotor skills, or ability in the visual and/or performing arts.

Gifted students require a differentiated program if their schooling is to be commensurate with their level of learning. Special education can consist of one or several of the following alternatives depending upon the needs of the individual student: direct instruction in a learning resource center with other children of like needs (part-time or full-time pull-out), indirect instruction with the regular teacher receiving consultation, mentorship projects, advanced course work and advanced college placement.

Professional preparation for a teacher of gifted/talented students requires, at least, two years of successful teaching experience in regular education and nine semester hours (14 quarter hours) of graduate work in the area of educating gifted students, including a supervised practicum.

NORTH DAKOTA COLLEGES

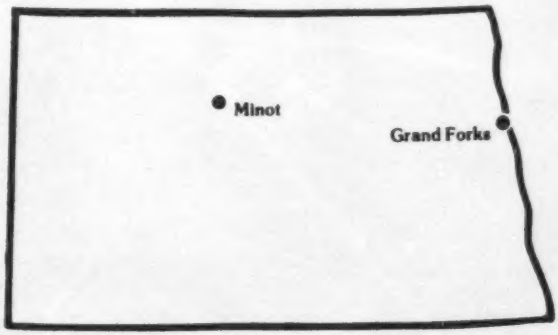
For information contact the Special Education chairman in the college offering training in an area of interest to you.

University of North Dakota
Center for Teaching and Learning
Division of Special Education
Grand Forks, ND 58201

- Mental Retardation
- Speech Pathology
- Early Childhood Education for the Handicapped
- Specific Learning Disabilities
- Visually Impaired
- Gifted and Talented
- Vocational Special Needs
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy

Minot State College
Division of Special Education
Minot, ND 58701

- Mental Retardation
- Speech Pathology
- Severely Multihandicapped
- Hearing Impaired
- Gifted and Talented
- Specific Learning Disabilities
- Audiology



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July 1982

The Regional Resource Centers are federally funded projects under the Special Education Programs. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement of the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

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